



Input opposing SB 2

Regarding private school vouchers
January 28, 2025

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following input in opposition to Senate Bill (SB) 2. The 2025 ATPE Legislative Program—adopted July 9, 2024, by a vote of the ATPE House of Delegates, a governing body of the association’s educator members—states:

ATPE opposes any voucher program, including a tuition tax credit, education savings account, or any other such program, that would direct public funds to private, home, or for-profit virtual schools.

This represents the collective view of our bipartisan statewide membership. This view has been separately confirmed by numerous internal polls of our membership, more than 70% of whom self-identify as Republican, Libertarian, or independent voters.

The Coalition for Public Schools provides the following definition of a voucher program:

Any legislation or program that diverts public funds (through a tax credit, rebate, scholarship or any other means) to directly or indirectly subsidize a private education is a voucher.

Any funds either collected by the state or a local taxing entity, or funds that would have been collected but for a tax exemption or credit, are considered public funds.

Texas schools currently face a funding crisis. ATPE believes the Texas Legislature should prioritize improving overall funding for public schools, as well as targeted investments in the areas facing the most significant challenges, instead of establishing a parallel system with less transparency and accountability. As with previously proposed voucher legislation, SB 2 offers up tax dollars without any mechanism to provide accountability back to taxpayers, including not providing taxpayers with the ability to compare the academic performance of voucher students with that of the public school population.

The voucher proposal has already gone from \$500 million for the first year of implantation to \$1 billion for the first year. Simply covering the current population of students whose families already choose not to enroll in the public school system would cost between \$6 billion and \$8 billion per year. If passed, that level of spending would crowd out other priorities. SB 2 would do nothing to help the vast majority of students who will remain in underfunded public schools. Should the Legislature prioritize creating a subsidy for current private school students over dedicating those financial resources to improving public education or the other pressing issues vying for limited state dollars, such as funding water infrastructure, the electric grid, border security, or roads?

Notwithstanding these criticisms, ATPE is appreciative the Senate has offered SB 2 as a standalone bill. It is appropriate that the issue of private school vouchers be debated on its own merits.

We look forward to working together on solutions to improve public education for all 5.5 million Texas public school students. We respectfully ask that you oppose SB 2. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 85,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for more than 5.5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.